

Bryant, Lawrence Chesterfield

The History of St. John Baptist Church, Red  
Oak, North Carolina.

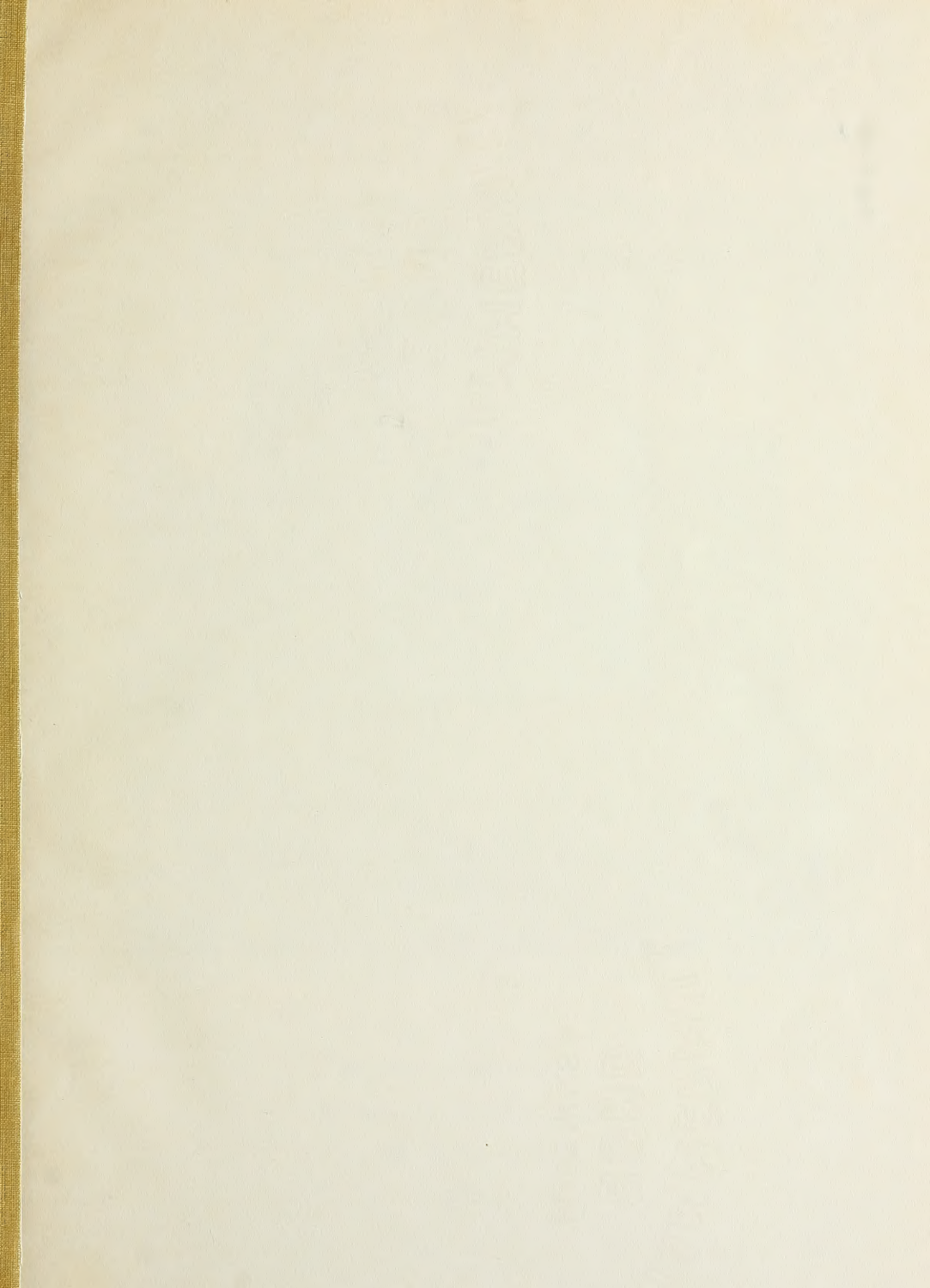
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ST. JOHN BAPTIST CHURCH  
REVEREND WILTON BYRD, PASTOR  
Red Oak, North Carolina

1971



HISTORY OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST CHURCH

11

at

Red Oak, North Carolina

REVEREND WILTON BYRD, PASTOR

Dr. Lawrence C. Bryant, Writer and Publisher

SOUTH CAROLINA STATE COLLEGE

Box 1615, State College

Orangeburg, South Carolina 29115

January 1971

HISTORY OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST CHURCH

25

and Oak, North Carolina

REVEREND WILSON BIRD, PASTOR

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Dr. Lawrence C. Bryant, Printer and Publisher

SOUTH CAROLINA STATE COLLEGE

Box 1015, State College

Orangeburg, South Carolina 29115

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DEDICATION

This church history is dedicated to the memory of the late Mrs. Georgianna Harrison Bryant, a life long member of St. John Baptist Church. She is buried in the church cemetery beside her husband Lawrence Bryant. On August 8, 1860, she was born in Halifax County, North Carolina, and she died on February 6, 1951 in Alexandria, Virginia. Georgianna was the mother of Wade Leary, Ora Belle, Benjamin Willis, Sr., Pattie Lucy, James Sterrett, and Henry Leslie who are buried in St. John Church Cemetery. Her other children Mack Lawrence, George Washington, Emmett, Margaret (Maggie Lee), and Mittie Bee live as Christians. These children were born to the union of Lawrence Bryant and Georgianna Harrison Bryant.

This Christian mother survived her husband by thirty-nine years, from 1912 to 1951. Mr. W. L. Jones said, "She worked against her own private interest for what was right."

Since this lady was the grandmother of the writer, she exerted her Christian influence upon him as she did her children and other people who lived in the St. John Church Community.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The writer wishes to acknowledge help from the late Mr. W. L. Jones and Mrs. Helen Smith Bullock. The researcher visited with Mr. Jones at his home during the summer of 1969 to collect facts concerning the early history of St. John Baptist Church. Some data were collected during that visit. When the writer shared the collected data with Mrs. Bullock, she sought to verify, correct, and make additions.

Mrs. Bullock typed most of the data included in this history.

Without their help it would have been impossible for me to have written this brief history.

During 1968, on a research trip to Nash County Courthouse the researcher located the deed for the acre of land on which the beautiful church edifice is constructed.

The writer attended worship service at St. John Church on October 19, 1970, the third Sunday while homecoming service was being held and made the picture of the church building found on the front cover.

Mr. W. L. Jones, Mrs. Estella Bullock, and Mrs. Rosa Oakley Bryant verified that Mr. Mack Lawrence Bryant was a trustee, and Benjamin Willis Bryant a deacon.

Except for a few facts, this record was published in The Orangeburg Historical and genealogical Record, Volume II, No. 1, pages 9-12. A copy is deposited in the State Library in Raleigh.





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## INTRODUCTION

Based on the records available to the writer, Mr. W. L. Jones, and Mrs. Helen Smith Bullock, the brief history was written. The location of the first church is presented. The date of land purchase, ministers, trustees, deacons, and present membership are included.

Since the writer was born and reared in the Church community, baptized by the Pastor in Swift Creek, and became a member of St. John, he does have some limited knowledge of the history.

Lawrence Bryant attended service in "Dusty John" and his grandfather Bythel Bryant came for him whenever a storm arose.

When the records of the church kept by Mr. R. E. Miles are located in the home of some church member, these can be used to make the church history more complete.

Reverend Lawrence C. Bryant



## ST. JOHN BAPTIST CHURCH

1872-St. John was founded in a bush harbor on Harry Hilliard estate.

1877-1883

"Old Dusty John," located on the rock of the Harry Hilliard estate, had a dirt floor.

1883- St. John Baptist Church was moved to the present location.

Seven trustees of the Church bought one acre of land on December 29, 1883 from James M. Vaughn and his wife Morning for \$20.00. The trustees were:

Isaac Hilliard

Arnold Hilliard

Warren Jones

Willis Smith, Sr.

Haywood Pope

Dallas Edwards

Frederick Hines

The pastor of the church in 1883 was Junius Alston.

The first church building on the present site was a straight-up one, a frame building. It was sold to Arnold Hilliard about 1899.

1900 -Another building was constructed which looked more like modern church buildings. It had a steeple and an entrance. The first pastor serving at this location was Reverend Simon Hicks. Some of the pastors are given in the order of service:

Reverend Junius Alston

Reverend Simon Hicks

Reverend Allen Thomas





Reverend Verge Harper  
 Reverend John Martin  
 Reverend Conelius Utley  
 Reverend James Tunson  
 Reverend W. L. Mason  
 Reverend H. H. Hart  
 Reverend C. C. Sharp  
 Reverend O. M. James  
 Reverend James A. Avery  
 Reverend Wilton Byrd

#### DEACONS

These deacons served prior to the ones listed in 1942.

John Miles  
 Nelson Hilliard  
 Charlie Jones  
 Charlie Horner  
 Richard Arrington  
 Willie Byrd  
 Nathaniel Lewis  
 Benjamin Willis Bryant, Sr.  
 S. D. Hilliard

#### TRUSTEES

Mack Lawrence Bryant  
 Willie Smith, Jr.



John Richard Taylor

George Edwards

W. R. Royster

Sutton Alston

Hardie Hilliard

James Stokes

Robert Thorne

David Parker

Cleveland Williams

#### BUILDING COMMITTEE

Dorsey G. Gaylor

Willie L. Lyons

Samuel J. Thompson

W. A. Jones

1942-1970

The record presented below was kept by the Church Clerk, Mrs. Helen Bullock. "I was elected Church Clerk on August 18, 1945, following the death of the late Robert E. Miles, who had served as clerk many years prior to his death.

The book with the records in it that he was using at that time of his death started with the record of the Council that was held on October 18, 1942.

At that time Reverend W. L. Mason was pastor. I do not have the record showing the exact date he took over as pastor. The record does show the data his pastoral duties terminated,





April 15, 1945. He served for four years. During these years, his salary ranged from \$20.00 to \$25.00. He also worked along with the members doing carpentry work with no extra charges for the benefit of the church.

Deacons working under Reverend Mason during his pastoral stay were as follows:

Dorsey G. Gaylor, deceased

David Sessoms, deceased

Samuel J. Thompson, deceased

William H. Hilliard, deceased

James Jones, Sr., deceased

W. A. Jones, deceased

From April 15, 1945 until October 20, 1945, the church was without a regular pastor. On October 20, 1945, Reverend H. H. Hart was elected as pastor at a salary of \$45.00 per month. For some reason or another he was never able to serve the pastoral day, but would send someone in his place. This the church did not condone. Therefore, he was dismissed as Pastor on June 15, 1946.

From June 15, 1946 until November 16, 1946, we were again without a regular pastor.

On November 16, 1946, we elected Reverend C. C. Sharp of Tarboro, North Carolina as pastor. He served as pastor for about five or six years. (My book with the records from January 1, 1950 to August 16, 1952 has been misplaced). Therefore, I do not know the exact date his pastoral duties terminated. The



record beginning August 16, 1952 shows that we were without a pastor.

On October 18, 1952, we elected Reverend O. M. James of Tarboro, North Carolina. He served faithfully until his death, September 19, 1954. This was a short period of about two years. He was taken over by death at the St. John Baptist Church. During his years of service the pastor's salary was \$50.00 per month.

From September 19, 1954 to February 19, 1955, we were again without a pastor.

On February 19, 1955, we elected Reverend James A. Avery of Raleigh, North Carolina to serve as pastor. He served faithfully until his death on October 27, 1968. This was a period of about 13 years. (He was overtaken by death after preaching at his fourth Sunday church en route to hospital). During the period of years, his salary was raised from \$50.00 to \$80.00 per month.

From October 27, 1968 until July 19, 1969 we were again without a regular pastor.

On July 19, 1969 we elected Reverend Wilton Byrd of Rocky Mount, North Carolina as pastor, beginning with a salary of \$80.00 per month.

The members of the present Deacon Board are as follows:

Dunbar Hilliard

W. A. Jones, died in 1970

Willie Royster

Willie Tayler



John Henry Williams

Paul L. Jones"

CHURCH CLERKS

W. L. Jones

Willie L. Lyons

Robert E. Miles

Mrs. Helen Smith Bullock, August 8, 1945(Beginning)

Mrs. Helen Smith Bullock,

CHURCH CLERK

Mrs. Bullock, may God continue to bless you thy good and faithful servant.





## ST. JOHN BAPTIST CHURCH

### Current Membership

- |                         |                          |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Dunbar Hilliard      | 26. Glanders Hilliard    |
| 2. Paul Jones           | 27. Hiawatha Hilliard    |
| 3. Willie Royster       | 28. John Hedgepeth       |
| 4. Willie Taylor        | 29. Avery Hilliard       |
| 5. John H. Williams     | 30. Christopher Hilliard |
| 6. Charlie Alston       | 31. Elliot Hudson        |
| 7. Sutton Alston        | 32. Jimmie Jacobs        |
| 8. Willie Alston        | 33. Joseph Jones, Sr.    |
| 9. Samuel Arrington     | 34. Joseph Jones, Jr.    |
| 10. Frank Abbott        | 35. James Leonard        |
| 11. Johnnie Battle      | 36. Asker Marshman       |
| 12. Roscoe Barnes       | 37. Fred McDaniel        |
| 13. Emmitt Bryant       | 38. Dennis Mitchell      |
| 14. Stephen A. Bullock  | 39. Herman Myrick, Sr.   |
| 15. Sherman Coley       | 40. Herman Myrick, Jr.   |
| 16. James Brown         | 41. Titus Myrick         |
| 17. Clifton Edwards     | 42. George Myrick        |
| 18. Aaron Fox           | 43. Robert E. Myrick     |
| 19. Emerson Harrison    | 44. Ralph Hiles          |
| 20. Abel Hilliard       | 45. Leon Labry           |
| 21. Allen Hilliard      | 46. Bobby Moody          |
| 22. Henry Hilliard      | 47. John Moore           |
| 23. Hardy Hilliard, Sr. | 48. Malichi Moore        |
| 24. Ferman Hilliard     | 49. Kendell McDaniel     |
| 25. Charles Hilliard    | 50. Dave Parker          |



- |                            |                            |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 51. Wiley Plummer          | 78. James Hilliard         |
| 52. Reginal Ricks          | 79. Jimmie Lee Hilliard    |
| 53. John Rogers, Sr.       | 80. Charles Williams       |
| 54. Herman Royster         | 81. Joseph Williams        |
| 55. Alton Royster          | 82. Timothy Williams       |
| 56. Thurman Royster        | 83. Cleveland Williams     |
| 57. Willie Royster, Jr.    | 84. Ned Williams           |
| 58. Henry Lee Royster, Jr. | 85. John T. Williams       |
| 59. Percy Sessoms          | 86. Isiah Williams         |
| 60. Alvin Sessoms          | 87. Samuel Wilkins         |
| 61. Terry Sessoms          | 88. William Lee Ricks, Jr. |
| 62. James Stokes, Sr.      | 89. Joseph Richardson      |
| 63. James Stokes, Jr.      | 90. Clemon Royster         |
| 64. James Stokes III       | 91. Jasper P. Sessoms      |
| 65. Robert Lee Stokes      | 92. Willie M. Smith        |
| 66. William Stallings      | 93. Maudie Thompson        |
| 67. Mack Spruell           | 94. Lucy Jones             |
| 68. Ervin Taylor           | 95. Lula M. Hilliard       |
| 69. Robert Thorne, Sr.     | 96. Arbutus Hilliard       |
| 70. Robert, Thorne, Jr.    | 97. Mattie Taylor          |
| 71. McKinley Thorne        | 98. Lula M. Alston         |
| 72. Clifton Thorne         | 99. Julia M. Alston        |
| 73. Melvin Thorne          | 100. Julia D. Alson        |
| 74. William Henry Thorne   | 101. Sula A. Alston        |
| 75. James Brown            | 102. Lona B. Abbott        |
| 76. Kenneth Cobb           | 103. Mary Alston           |
| 77. Sam Drewry             | 104. Carrie Arrington      |





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|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| 105. Ella Hunter Arrington  | 131. Gladys Cooper      |
| 106. Maggie Arrington       | 132. Nancy Cooper       |
| 107. Barbara Arrington      | 133. Julia Ann Cooper   |
| 108. Bettie Lee Arrington   | 134. Annie E. Craig     |
| 109. Letha D. Armstrong     | 135. Lizzie Drewery     |
| 110. Rena D. Avent          | 136. Mary Ellen Drewery |
| 111. Mary Avent             | 137. Annie Drewery      |
| 112. Rosa Avent             | 138. Susie Davis        |
| 113. Elmira Battle          | 139. Margaret Davis     |
| 114. Hattie Battle          | 140. Eula Duke          |
| 115. Mozell Battle          | 141. Martha Ellen Davis |
| 116. Ida Mae Battle         | 142. Ruby Dixon         |
| 117. Lucille Royster Battle | 143. Joyce Ann Douglas  |
| 118. Pearlle Batts          | 144. Minnie Douglas     |
| 119. Lillie M. Barnes       | 145. Lattie M. Edwards  |
| 120. Mammie Braswell        | 146. Callie Edwards     |
| 121. Viola Boddie           | 147. Bessie Edwards     |
| 122. Annie Mae Burt         | 148. Deborah Edwards    |
| 123. Ada Bryant             | 149. Shirley R. Edwards |
| 124. Theresa Brown          | 150. Annie Clee Edwards |
| 125. Helen S. Bullock       | 151. Joan Eason         |
| 126. Brenda Clark           | 152. Boneta Finch       |
| 127. Marjorie Cobb          | 153. Deloris Fox Mabry  |
| 128. Joyce Ann Cobb         | 154. Anna Fox           |
| 129. Delia Cooper           | 155. Brenda Fox         |
| 130. Cora H. Cooper         | 156. Lena Gaylor        |



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|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 157. Lillie Mae Harrison    | 184. Ozella Hudson          |
| 158. El Francis Harrison    | 185. Sadie Hunter           |
| 159. Arneice Hilliard       | 186. Lucille Jones          |
| 160. Cynthia Diane Hilliard | 187. Evenia Jones           |
| 161. Carolyn Hilliard       | 188. Lula Mae Kingsbury     |
| 162. Linda Hilliard Moody   | 189. Charity Lucas          |
| 163. Patricia Hilliard      | 190. Louise A. Lyons        |
| 164. Joyce Hilliard         | 191. Lena B. Lewis          |
| 165. Stella Hilliard        | 192. Lucy J. Leonard        |
| 166. Pauline Hilliard       | 193. Dorothy Leonard Finch  |
| 167. Effie Hilliard         | 194. Annie Mae Leonard      |
| 168. L. B. Hilliard         | 195. Kay Francis Mitchell   |
| 169. Christine Hilliard     | 196. Susie Mitchell         |
| 170. Pearlle E. Hilliard    | 197. Bettie Mae Mitchell    |
| 171. Dazella Hilliard Horne | 198. Marie Myrick           |
| 172. Lillie M. Hilliard     | 199. Annie Ree Myrick       |
| 173. Vessie Hilliard        | 200. Odessa Myrick          |
| 174. Bessie Hargrove        | 201. Francis Myrick         |
| 175. Maggie Hargrove        | 202. Erma Myrick            |
| 176. Yvonne Hagans          | 203. Margaret Moore         |
| 177. Cora A. Hagans         | 204. Bettie Lou Plummer     |
| 178. Priscilla Hagans       | 205. Peggy Plummer          |
| 179. Pearl Hagans           | 206. Carolyn Plummer        |
| 180. Emma Jean Hart         | 207. Doris Plummer Roberson |
| 181. Rosa Horner            | 208. Dorthene Plummer       |
| 182. Louvenia Horner        | 209. Queen E. Plummer       |
| 183. Susan H. Hudson        | 210. Mary Person            |



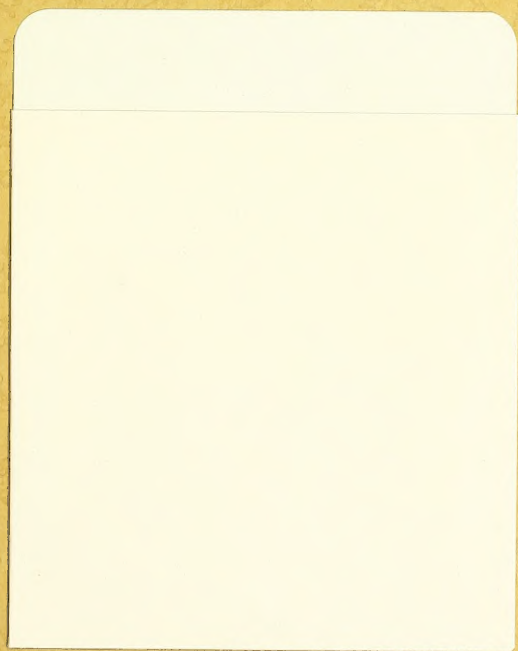
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|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 211. Martha Ann Parker       | 238. Bettie Jean Titles      |
| 212. Dorothy Parker          | 239. Geraldine Throne        |
| 213. Bessie Purvis           | 240. Annette Thorne          |
| 214. Mary Coppage Perry      | 241. Arlene Thorne           |
| 215. Odessa Pretlow          | 242. Louvenia Thorne         |
| 216. Ruth Richardson         | 243. Trula Thorne            |
| 217. Margaret Ricks          | 244. Bertha Thompson Dempsey |
| 218. Lucy Ricks              | 245. Beatrice Turnage        |
| 219. Florida Ann Ricks       | 246. Azaree Taylor           |
| 220. Mary Belle Ricks        | 247. Ineatha Taylor          |
| 221. Lizzie Ricks            | 248. Loraine Tucker          |
| 222. Ardelia Ricks           | 249. Brenda Tucker           |
| 223. Jeraldine Hilliard      | 250. Maggie Coley            |
| 224. Pattie Rogers, Sr.      | 251. Bettie Jane Cooper      |
| 225. Caroline Royster        | 252. Jackie L. Edwards       |
| 226. Annie My. Royster       | 253. Mary E. Fulgham         |
| 227. Mary Royster, Sr.       | 254. Gladys Harris           |
| 228. Lorine Roberson Bullock | 255. Lenora Hilliard         |
| 229. Hinnie Roberson         | 256. Maggie Hedgepeth        |
| 230. Katie Roberson          | 257. Alice Mabry             |
| 231. Angelia Stokes          | 258. Eula Mitchell           |
| 232. Brenda Stokes           | 259. Addie P. Mitchell       |
| 233. Mary Stokes             | 260. Diane Ricks             |
| 234. Lillie Stokes           | 261. Vivian Stokes           |
| 235. Rebecca Stallings       | 262. Dorothy Jones           |
| 236. Polly Sexton            | 263. Carolyn Greene          |
| 237. Beady Spruell           | 264. Carolyn Williams        |















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